



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 367

February Session, 2016

Substitute Senate Bill No. 176

Senate, March 31, 2016

The Committee on Education reported through SEN. SLOSSBERG of the 14th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE SMART START PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10-506 of the 2016 supplement to the general
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective from passage*):

4 (a) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2015, to June 30, 2024,
5 inclusive, the Office of Early Childhood, in consultation with the
6 Department of Education, shall design and administer the Connecticut
7 Smart Start competitive grant program to provide grants to local and
8 regional boards of education for capital and operating expenses related
9 to establishing or expanding a preschool program under the
10 jurisdiction of the board of education for the town. A local or regional
11 board of education may submit an application to the office, in
12 accordance with the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, and
13 may receive (1) a grant for capital expenses in an amount not to exceed
14 seventy-five thousand dollars per classroom for costs related to the
15 renovation of an existing public school to accommodate the

16 establishment or expansion of a preschool program, and (2) an annual
17 grant for operating expenses (A) in an amount not to exceed five
18 thousand dollars per child served by such grant, or (B) in an amount
19 not to exceed seventy-five thousand dollars for each preschool
20 classroom, provided no town shall receive a total annual grant for
21 operating expenses greater than three hundred thousand dollars. Each
22 local or regional board of education that establishes or expands a
23 preschool program under this section shall be eligible to receive an
24 annual grant for operating expenses for a period of five years,
25 provided such preschool program meets standards established by the
26 Commissioner of Early Childhood. Such local or regional board of
27 education may submit an application for renewal of such grant to the
28 office.

29 (b) On and after July 1, 2014, local and regional boards of education,
30 individually, or cooperatively [,] pursuant to section 10-158a, may
31 apply, at such time and in such manner as the commissioner
32 prescribes, to the office for a capital grant and an operating grant for
33 the purposes described in subsection (a) of this section. To be eligible
34 to receive such grants under this section, an applicant board of
35 education shall (1) demonstrate that it has a need for establishing or
36 expanding a preschool program using information requested by the
37 commissioner on a form prescribed by the commissioner, such as data
38 collected from the preschool experience survey, described in section
39 10-515, (2) submit a plan for the expenditure of grant funds received
40 under this section that outlines how such board of education will use
41 such funds to establish or expand a preschool program, including, but
42 not limited to, the amount that such board will contribute to the
43 operation of such preschool program and how such board of education
44 will provide access to preschool for children who would not otherwise
45 be able to enroll in a preschool program, and (3) submit a letter of
46 support for establishing or expanding a preschool program by the local
47 or regional school readiness council, described in section 10-16r, if any,
48 for the school district. The commissioner shall give priority to boards
49 of education (A) that demonstrate the greatest need for the
50 establishment or expansion of a preschool program, and (B) whose

51 plan allocates at least [sixty] fifty per cent of the spaces in such
52 preschool program to children who are members of families that are at
53 or below seventy-five per cent of the state median income, or fifty per
54 cent of the spaces in such preschool program to children who are
55 eligible for free and reduced price lunches. The commissioner, in
56 reviewing applications submitted under this subsection, shall also take
57 into consideration (i) whether an applicant board of education (I)
58 currently offers a full-day kindergarten program, (II) will be
59 cooperating and coordinating with other governmental and
60 community programs to provide services during periods when the
61 preschool program is not in session, or (III) will collaborate with other
62 boards of education, as part of a cooperative arrangement pursuant to
63 section 10-158a, to offer a regional preschool program, and (ii) current
64 community capacity for preschool programs and current opportunities
65 for preschool for children in the community.

66 (c) A preschool program created or expanded under this section
67 shall (1) contain a classroom with an individual who holds certification
68 pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood
69 education or early childhood special education and is an employee of
70 the board of education providing a preschool program under this
71 section, (2) maintain a classroom size and teacher-child ratio that is in
72 compliance with standards established by the National Association for
73 the Education of Young Children, (3) obtain accreditation, as described
74 in section 10-16p, not later than three years after the creation or
75 expansion of the preschool program, [and] (4) be located in a public
76 school or in a space maintained by an early care and education and
77 child development program provider, pursuant to an agreement
78 between a board of education and such early care and education and
79 child development program provider, and (5) allocate the spaces in
80 such preschool program as outlined in the plan for the expenditure of
81 grant funds described in subsection (b) of this section.

82 (d) Each local or regional board of education receiving a grant under
83 this section shall submit an annual report, on a form and in a manner
84 prescribed by the commissioner, to the Office of Early Childhood

85 regarding the status and operation of the preschool program.

86 (e) A local or regional board of education receiving grant funds
87 under this section for a preschool program may implement a sliding
88 fee scale for the cost of services provided to children enrolled in such
89 preschool program.

90 (f) For the school year commencing July 1, 2016, and each school
91 year thereafter, each local or regional board of education receiving a
92 grant under this section for a preschool program shall commence such
93 preschool program on or before the same day as the first day of the
94 regular school year for kindergarten.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	10-506

ED Joint Favorable Subst.

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 17 \$	FY 18 \$
Various Municipalities	Redistribution of Smart Start Funds	See Below	See Below

Explanation

The bill makes changes to the criteria used by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to prioritize Smart Start program applications, which could result in a redistribution of funding between local and regional boards of education establishing or operating preschool programs, but will not result in an overall fiscal impact to OEC.¹

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the level of funding available for the Smart Start program.

¹ The Connecticut Smart Start competitive grant program is funded by bond funds, as authorized by the State Bond Commission.

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 176*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE SMART START PROGRAM.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill makes changes to the laws governing the Connecticut Smart Start Competitive Grant program, which provides grants to local and regional boards of education for capital and operating expenses related to establishing or expanding a preschool program.

Under current law, boards who apply to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) for Smart Start grants receive priority consideration from the OEC commissioner if their application includes, among other things, a plan to allocate at least 60% of the preschool program seats to children from families at or below 75% of the state median income. The bill lowers the floor for priority consideration to plans that allocate at least 50% of their program seats to such children.

Additionally, the bill requires preschool programs created or expanded with Smart Start grants to (1) allocate seats in accordance with the grant expenditure plan submitted with their application and (2) begin on or before the first day kindergarten starts in their district in the 2016-17 school year and thereafter.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 29 Nay 2 (03/14/2016)